

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Korea

CONFIDENTIAL

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SUBJECT North Korea East Coast Ammunition Transport

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1. When UN planes began flying over Najindong (130-19, 42-12) in [REDACTED] all North Korean vessels in the port were bombed and sunk, including motor boats. Soviet craft left the port for undisclosed destinations. To replace their military craft, the North Korean military authorities conscripted all fishing vessels, which had not been bombed by UN planes, for military transport use. These craft are typically of wood, about 25 feet long and ten feet wide, with sails and a jib, a high prow, and a large tiller. They have three holds and four cabins. Crews are usually four men.

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2. One of these vessels in [REDACTED] loaded a cargo of a thousand cases of ammunition at Najindong. Part of this was for rifles; the rest was in cases measuring eight inches by three feet by three and a half feet, otherwise undescribed. A lieutenant, a master sergeant, and two privates of the North Korean People's Army were assigned to escort the cargo. A boat waited two days for more ammunition, which did not arrive.

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3. The vessel left Najindong on the night of [REDACTED] and arrived the following morning at Chongjin (129-49, 41-46) after a voyage of twelve hours. She left that afternoon for Tongcho-ri (128-36, 38-13), arriving the night of [REDACTED]. There she unloaded her cargo, which was taken overland to Chumunjin (128-49, 37-53) and thence, divided into two parts, to Yechon (128-27, 36-39) and to the east coast, according to the ship captain. The return trip, which included a visit to a small unknown bay south of Wonsan (127-26, 39-10), required three nights; the troops returned with the vessel, but there was no cargo.

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4. Nine vessels of this type loaded with ammunition arrived at Tongcho-ri on the morning of [REDACTED], and there were 25 anchored in the area.
5. All these craft sail only at night. By day they anchor in small inlets, alongside cliffs, or at islands near ports. They avoid anchoring in actual harbor areas, even at Najindong.

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6. Civilians on the east coast of Korea from Najindong south to the 38th

Parallel were suffering from a shortage of food. 

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 their diet was largely potatoes and wheat.